

Updated Alcohol Guidelines

“Low Risk” Alcohol Consumption

Weekly Guideline on Regular Drinking

Men *and* women are advised that it is safest not to regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol / week.

This has changed as men are more at risk of suffering immediate harm (e.g. injury), while women are at greater risk of long term health harm. This level keeps the risk of developing ill health low.

Single occasion drinking

If consuming 14 units / week, spread this evenly over 3 or more days. Limit the level and pace of drinking, and stay safe. Have several alcohol free days / week.



Pregnancy and Alcohol

Women are advised to avoid consuming any alcohol when pregnant or when planning pregnancy. The risk of harm to baby is low if small amounts of alcohol have been drunk before becoming aware of the pregnancy. However, it is safest to not drink alcohol at all.

If you use an alcohol intake screening tool, e.g. FAST, please reference units for women (14 units) for both genders from now

Why is there a change?

New alcohol guidelines were released on the 8th of January 2016 by the UK Chief Medical Officers, following an expert review of evidence on the short and long term impact on health from alcohol. This includes the increased risk of developing cancer from drinking alcohol, plus the harm from binge drinking.

The new guidelines now advise on a 'low level risk' of alcohol consumption, rather than a 'safe' level. Risks start from any level of regular drinking and rise with the amount being drunk. This means there is no amount a person can drink without there being a risk to their health.

People have the right to accurate information and clear advice about alcohol and its health risks, to make informed choices about the risks they are willing to take from alcohol intake and frequency.

Views on beneficial alcohol intake are now less reliable than previously considered.

For more information please see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489795/summary.pdf